

Building designs turn Jud into Village of Murals

By Andrea Winkjer Collin

There's nothing like a fresh coat of paint to perk up a building. As they work to get their town ship-shape for their centennial next summer, those in the Jud community have taken this to heart – and gone far beyond a coat of paint.

The paint cans and brushes in the hands of Jud area artists have turned this small farming community into a Village of Murals. These works of art have been drawing the curious off Highway 35 in LaMoure County and into town, welcoming them with visions of griffins, egrets, eagles, meadow-lark, a wolf, prairie roses, carousel horses, rural farm scenes, waterfalls and flower beds.

Every type of building has been transformed into an artist's canvas, including the post office, mini-mall, bar, county machine shed, round steel bin, park restrooms and several

residences.

The first mural welcoming visitors to Jud is on a brightly painted building that says

“Welcome Friends.” It was created as one of the town's annual summer art projects for area children, with assistance from Pauline Bergman and other area arts supporters.

Perhaps the inspiration for the murals throughout town came from a painting on the side of the Jud Mini Mall, which has stood for the past several decades. Bergman says adding new murals seemed to be an idea that fit in nicely with plans for the centennial next June 24-26.

This Village of Murals project is in its third year, and has been supported by funds from the North Dakota Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Forestry Service's Art in Rural Communities Assistance Initiative, the Sheyenne-James Rural Community Development program, the Dakota Valley Electric Operation Roundup fund, as well as private donors.

Four individuals have been the primary artists for the large murals. Jud resident Oral Elhard designed and painted the centennial logo on city hall, the wolf howling at the moon on the bar building, and the pheasant hunting scene on Rode's storage building. He is also the creator of “Carousel.”

When Krista Vogel of Kulm entered Jud's annual fall festival art show last year, Bergman and others recognized



the talent of this 16-year old and recruited her to do some murals. In August she finished her third, "Tranquility," which features an egret and is painted on the south wall of the old blacksmith shop. Her other two murals are "Running Free," on the north side and "Eagle's Flight," painted on the front of the blacksmith shop. She also did the freehand painting of a griffin, which she painted on the bathrooms in the city park.

Rosemary Gasal of Spiritwood is the creator of the stamp on the post office building, featuring a prairie rose and meadowlark, and the flowers on the cottage. The LaMoure County shed is the canvas for Gasal's farm scene.

In addition to loaning the use of its shed wall for a mural, Bergman says LaMoure County has been very supportive of the project, offering a free loan of its scaffolding to the painters. "This is a significant contribution," she says, "considering that it costs as much as \$200 a week to rent scaffolding."

"Lost Landmarks of North Dakota" depicts an old house, water pump and windmill, and decorates a farm storage building on the north side of town. It was done by artist Evelyn Sjostrom of Jamestown.

Besides these large projects, Bergman says other Jud residents have caught the spirit and painted designs on their garages or other buildings. Some have done it themselves, while others have hired artists to do it for them. The project supplies the paint to everyone, which Bergman says is basic exterior house paint.

From idea to design to the actual painting of the mural, Bergman says each artist uses a different technique. One will apply it freehand on the building, while another will use a grid to draw it to scale, and another will use a projector to trace the initial image onto the surface. "Because of their size, probably the greatest challenge is to get the right perspective for the paintings," Bergman says. "One feature all paintings share is the letter 'j' hidden somewhere in the design."

Bergman says a dedication of the murals will be held sometime during the centennial celebration, and a brochure and walking tour of the Village of Murals will be available for visitors to Jud.

"This has involved a lot of volunteer hours by area residents," she says. "But it's been so fun to watch the artists create their designs."



Paula and Mike Nitschke and Mary Kalmback have been restoring the 100-year-old Dagen building, which until 1991 was Jud's town store and before that a hotel. When completed, it will become a centennial museum and headquarters.

Another project in downtown Jud is centered around one of the town's oldest buildings. Deanna Dagen has been restoring her 99-year-old Dagen store building, which until 1991 was Jud's town store. Originally built as a hotel/store, it has been in the Dagen family for 96 years. When completed, Dagen's grocery will open again for the three-day centennial celebration. In addition, a centennial museum will be open in two storage rooms at the back of the store.

This year's Jud's Fall Festival, which features an annual art show, was October 2-3. Information about the festival is available at www.judnd.com, or 701-685-2269.

For more information about Jud's "Village of Murals," contact Pauline Bergman at 701-685-2269. More information about the Jud Centennial on June 24- 26 is available at www.judnd.com.

Jud's Village of Murals is one of the LaMoure County arts programs that has received support from the North Dakota Council on the Arts. For more information about the North Dakota Council on the Arts and its programs that support community across the state, call 701-328-7590, or visit its website at www.discovernd.com/arts.

